



June marks the start of the 2015 hurricane season, which continues through November 30th. Florida has gone a record nine years without a land falling hurricane of category 3 or higher. The National Hurricane Center predicts that this year we will experience a “below average” hurricane season, however you should still remain cautious and aware. Anticipating inclement weather can help you and your loved ones stay safe and help you cope with the stress of disaster. Follow these tips to plan ahead and consider what actions to take before and during a storm.

Before a Storm

Make sure that you have enough non-perishable food and water in your home to last you and your family at least a few weeks. Prepare other disaster supplies such as batteries, flashlights, plastic bags, toiletries, clothing, cash and a first aid kit. Gather any important papers and secure them in plastic. Make sure to include social security cards, birth certificates, diplomas, titles or deeds to property, as well as any insurance policies. These items can be difficult and time-consuming to replace. Take video or photos of your property before you leave. This can assist later with any insurance claims for damage that may need to be filed. Prepare an evacuation route and know the location of the nearest shelter, in addition to any facilities that are able to accommodate pets, if needed. If you evacuate your home, do not leave your pets behind. Pets most likely cannot survive on their own and, if they do, you may not be able to find them when you return.

During a Storm

If you're not within an evacuation zone and attempt to weather the storm at home, stay inside away from windows and exterior doors. Make sure to listen to your local TV and radio for any information, as the strength and course of the storm can change quickly and without notice. Do not go outside during the calm eye of the hurricane. The worst part of the storm will happen once the eye passes and the winds blow from the opposite direction.



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The Florida Division of Emergency Management offers a website to help Floridians create a customized Family Disaster Plan at FloridaDisaster.org/family. This site allows each family to calculate the amount of food and water needed in the event of an emergency and gives supply checklists, provides local emergency contacts and evacuation routes. Each personalized plan also includes a checklist of things to do before, during and after a disaster.

The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services is the state's clearinghouse for consumer complaints, protection and information. For additional information, contact the department's consumer assistance center by calling 1-800-HELP-FLA (435-7352) within Florida, 1-800-FL-AYUDA (352-9832) en Español or (850) 410-3800 from outside of Florida or visit 800helpfla.com.



Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
Adam H. Putnam, Commissioner